Ban on Pak Nationals to Visit India

3665. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen a press report from Islamabad saying that the Pakistan Government has advised its citizens and nationals against travelling to India; and

(b) if so, what action is proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Government have seen these press reports. Government hope that Pakistan will abandon its negative attitude and join in efforts to establish good neighbourly relations.

Unhealthy location of Passport Office

3666. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether location of Regional Passport Office of Delhi is very tedious, unhealthy and without facility of cross-ventilation particularly during the summer season;

(b) whether location of the office at second floor is inconvenient to old because of the absence of lift-facility;

(c) whether one official at the Reception Office has been provided to attend thousands of people every day;

(d) whether there is no conspicuous display of various services requirement with formalities required and fees to be charged being provided country-wise;

(e) whether Government propose to take some drastic steps to improve the working of this office; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) to (f) The Regional Passport Office in Delhi, which is located on the 2nd floor of Shastri Bhavan, has in inadequate office space. No lift facilities are available to this office.

Government are aware of inconvenience caused to the public as well as officials working in this office due to shortage of space.

It has been decided to relocate the Passport Office in Delhi to Bhikaji Cama Place, R.K. Puram. The new premises will be equipped with necessary facilities.

Working conditions in the Regional Passport Office of Delhi

3667. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some tenure of stay has been fixed for officials either in gazetted or non-gazetted cadre working in Regional Passport Offices of the country;

(b) if so, the details of instructions issued in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that large number of officials have been working in Regional Passport Office at Delhi for more than four years;

(d) whether this overstay of officials in Delhi office has developed intimacy with touts;

(e) whether the general public at Delhi office is not being provided required level of service;

(f) whether if is a fact that only 50 to 60 members of general public are being attended at each counter during prescribed hours from 10.00 to 12.30 a.m. while the working hours are from 10.00 to 6.00 p.m.;

(g) whether Government propose to

transfer the officials who are overstaying the fixed tenure to provide better service to general public; and

(h) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) to (h) while no tenure of stay has been formally fixed it would be desirable for all officials (except Group 'D' officials and those taken on deputation) to have a tenure of 3-5 years depending on their grades. A number of officials working in various .passport Offices, including Delhi, have been in position for over 4 years. The Government, however, is not aware of this having resulted in their developing links with touts. Administrative guidelines governing transfers of the officials of Passport Offices are being framed. In future transfers will be regulated by these guidelines.

The public are free to visit the Regional Passport Office at Delhi from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on every working day except Wednesdays. On an average the office receives 1000 visitors who are serviced at 10 counters.

B.B.C. film on nuclear energy in India

3668. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the B.B.C. had recently shown a film on the use of nuclear energy by India;

(b) if so, whether Government had given permission for the filming of the above documentary in India;

(c) whether the film shows India in bad light; and

(d) if so, what action Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The Government is not aware of BBC having recently shown a film on nuclear energy in India. There was, however, a documentary titled 'Nuclear India: A dream gone sour' which was shown on Channel 3 of ITV.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The film seems to be motivated with a view to denigrade the achievements of India in the peaceful application of nuclear energy. The allegations made against India have been suitably rebutted through our High Commission in London to counter the misinformation brought out in the ITV film.

Rail link between Calcutta and North Eastern States via Bangladesh

3669. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: SHRI ASHIS SEN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up the matter with the Bangladesh Government for rail movement and water transport between North-Eastern States and Calcutta via Bangladesh; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Bangladesh authorities have been approached several times in the past with a request for providing rail transit facilities across the Bangladesh railway system. We already have an Inland Waterways Protocol with Bangladesh, linking Calcutta with two points in Assam. However, since this arragement leaves our States of Tripura and Meghalaya untouched, we have also approached the Bangladesh authorities